

Kess, Quinn

From: Paul Dowgewicz <paul dow@cox.net>
Sent: Sunday, February 24, 2013 10:34 PM
To: Kess, Quinn
Subject: Opposition Testimony on Bill #6050 - An Act Concerning Tolls At Connecticut's Borders

February 24, 2013

The Honorable Antonio Guerrero
Transportation Committee

Mr. Guerrero and Members of the Committee,

One of the favorite things an elected representative can do is raise taxes on people who can't vote against them. That's why car rental and hotel taxes are so popular. This bill is sponsored by Representatives and Senators who represent the areas farthest away from our State's borders. Last year my representative voted in committees for red light revenue cameras , but only for cities, so it wouldn't affect the smaller border towns she serves. The policies of imposing harmful policies, as long as it doesn't harm MY town, has to end.

No one can deny that Connecticut has large financial problems; both short and long term. Last year's tax and fee increases did not raise enough to avoid a deficit, nor improve the State's low job growth

The only thing that will improve the State's finances is to improve the economy. Connecticut used to have an unemployment rate well below the national rate. Now we are rated 42nd in the country. The fights of town vs. town won't solve the looming unfunded liability problem. Tax and fee policies must be set to expand the source of revenue, not just confiscate as much as you can. Gimmicks such as the First Five program or credits for glamorous entertainment productions divert resources from the thousands of businesses who want to exist and expand in Connecticut for the long term. Tolls will only make operating in Connecticut even more difficult.

Connecticut has a problem where it's young people are leaving after they are educated. These people are where new employment, new businesses and therefore new tax revenue can come from instead of from tolls. People age 5 through 19 make up 20.1% of the people in the U.S., and 20.2% of the people in Connecticut. However age group 20-34 make up 20.6% of the people in the U.S., but only 18.0% of the people in Connecticut. Connecticut therefore has 13% fewer people in this age group than the nation has. High taxes and the related high cost of living are chasing away the economic future of the State.

Tolls are only going to make Connecticut less desirable to live in and will discourage people from visiting. The 3rd highest fuel taxes in the country need to be lowered to encourage purchases within our State. The fuel tax process is very efficient. It operates with much lower overhead than a toll system and should not be changed except for removing the uncompetitive gross receipts tax.

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